

CA Halibut/White Seabass and Other Species Set Gillnet (>3.5 in mesh) Fishery

Fishing gear type: Gillnet

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: The total mean annual serious injury and mortality of humpback whales (CA/OR/WA stock) in this fishery is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stocks' Potential Biological Removal (PBR) levels. One humpback whale was seriously injured in this fishery in 2007, resulting in an annual mortality and serious injury rate of 0.2 animals/year, or 1.7% of the stock's PBR (PBR=11.3).

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a⁽¹⁾ indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification): California sea lion, U.S.; Harbor seal, CA; Humpback whale, CA/OR/WA⁽¹⁾; Long-beaked common dolphin, CA; Northern elephant seal, CA breeding; Short-beaked common dolphin, CA/OR/WA; Southern sea otter, CA

Estimated number of current participants: 50

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: None.

Year added to the LOF: 1996

Category when originally listed: Category I

Basis for original classification on the LOF: Observer data from 1991-1993 indicated that the estimated annual mortality and serious injury of the harbor porpoise (Monterey Bay stock) as 31 animals, or 91% of PBR (PBR=34).

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 80

Past names, if any: CA angel shark/halibut and other species set gillnet (>3.5in mesh) fishery (until 2009); CA angel shark/halibut and other species large mesh (>3.5in mesh) set gillnet fishery (until 2003).

Gear description/method for fishing: 200 fathom gillnet with stretch mesh size of 8.5 in (21.6 cm) for angel shark and halibut. Net soak duration is typically 8-10, 19-24, or 44-49 hours. Depth of water ranges from 15-50 (27.4-91.4 m) fathoms with most sets from 15-35 (27.4-64 m) fathoms. No more than 1,500 fathoms (2,743 m) of gill or trammel net may be fished in combination for California halibut and angel shark.

Target species: Halibut and white seabass.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: Ranges from U.S./Mexico border north to Monterey Bay and was localized in more productive areas. The central CA portion from Point Arguello to Point Reyes has been closed since September, 2002, following a ban on gillnets inshore of 60 fathoms (in response to fishery mortality exceeding PBR for the Monterey Bay harbor porpoise stock). Effort occurs year round, while it generally increases during summer months and declines during last 3 months of the year.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: Observer coverage was discontinued in 1994 after area closures were implemented prohibiting gillnets within 3 nmi of the mainland and within 1 nmi of the Channel Islands. Monterey Bay was observed in 1999-2000, showing that take of harbor porpoise (Monterey Bay stock) exceeded PBR, which lead CDFG to prohibit set gillnets within 60 fathoms along the central CA coast. The estimated observer coverage from 1990- 2005 was: 5%, 10%, 13%, 15%, 8%, 0%, 0%, 0%, 0%, 4%, 2%, 0%, 0%, 0%, and 0%, respectively.

* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

Management and regulations: The fishery is limited entry with gear restrictions and area closures, which managed by the CA Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). As of 2002, CDFG prohibits gillnet fishing in ocean waters that are 60 fathoms or less from Point Reyes to Point Arguello. Since 1990, set gill nets have been prohibited in state waters south of Point Arguello and within 70 fathoms or one mile, whichever is less, around the Channel Islands.

History of Changes on the LOF

2011 LOF:

- Added humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured. One humpback whale was seriously injured in this fishery in 2007, resulting in an annual mortality and serious injury rate of 0.2 animals/year, or 1.7% of the stock's PBR of 11.3. Therefore, a superscript "1" was also added after humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock), indicating that this stock is driving the Category II classification of the fishery. Observer coverage in this fishery was approximately 1% in 2006 and 17% in 2007. There was no observer coverage in 2004, 2005, or 2008.
- Removed the superscript "1" after CA sea lions (U.S. stock) and harbor seals (CA stock) in the list of species/stocks killed/injured. There have been observed interactions with these stocks in this fishery in recent years; however, the average total fishery mortality and serious injury is less than 10 percent of the respective PBR for both stocks.
- Estimated number of participants reduced from 58 to 50.

2009 LOF:

- Renamed the "CA Halibut/White Seabass and Other Species Set Gillnet Fishery (>3.5 in. mesh)" to more accurately reflect the target species of the fishery.
- Reclassified from Category I to Category II. This fishery was classified as Category I due to serious injury and mortality to the Monterey Bay and Morro Bay stocks of central CA harbor porpoises. A ban on set gillnetting in central CA was implemented in 2002. As a result, effort in this fishery shifted its concentration to southern CA, south of the range of these harbor porpoise stocks. The elimination of this fishery from the stocks' range removed the threat of mortality and serious injury to the stocks. Because interactions ceased as of 2002, no tier analysis was conducted for the level of annual mortality and serious injury of these stocks in this fishery for this proposed reclassification. The mean annual mortality and serious injury of CA sea lions in this fishery is 1,138, or 13 percent of PBR (PBR=8,511); the mean annual mortality and serious injury of harbor seals (CA stock) is 386, which is 20 percent of PBR (PBR=1,896).
- Removed harbor porpoise (central CA) from the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery, for reasons described in the bullet above.
- Added the superscript "1" following CA sea lions (U.S.) and harbor seals (CA stock), indicating that takes of these stocks are driving the classification of the fishery.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript "1" in Table 1 after harbor porpoise (central CA), indicating that takes of this stock are driving the classification of this fishery.

2003 LOF:

- Renamed the "CA Angel Shark/Halibut and Other Species Set Gillnet Fishery (>3.5 in. mesh)", to remove the reference to "large mesh" because 50 CFR Part 229.2 states that a large mesh gillnet has a mesh size of 7 to 18 inches.
- Added harbor seal (CA stock) back to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery to correct a typographical error in the 2001 LOF.

2001 LOF: Harbor seal (CA stock) inadvertently deleted from the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery (i.e., typographical error).

1999 LOF: Southern sea otter added to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. NMFS estimated southern sea otter mortality in the halibut set gill net fishery to have been 64 in 1990, zero from 1991 to 1994, 3 to 13 in 1995, 2 to 29 in 1996, 6 to 47 in 1997, 6 to 36 in 1998, 5 in 1999, and zero in 2000.

1998 LOF: Estimated number of participants reduced from 80 to 58.